

The Lake Pend Oreille Waterkeeper Volunteer-Based Water Quality Monitoring Program Provides Easily Accessible Long-Term Data Display for All

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Lake Pend Oreille Waterkeeper is a non-profit organization located in Sandpoint, Idaho. Our mission is to protect water quality in the Clark Fork/Pend Oreille (CFPO) watershed so our magnificent waterways remain swimmable, fishable, and drinkable for future generations. One of the core ways we work to achieve this mission is through our citizen science-based Water Quality Monitoring Program (WQMP). Each field season (June-October) our trained volunteers monitor 15 stations on Lake Pend Oreille and the Pend Oreille River monthly for 11 biotic and abiotic water quality parameters.

In addition to being the first consistent long-term water quality monitoring effort specific to the CFPO watershed, our WQMP dataset is unique in its accessibility to general audiences. This long-term data set (2012-2018) not only helps us pursue our mission, it helps our community and regulatory agencies identify trends and potential impairments especially along developed shorelines and in ecologically-sensitive areas. To our knowledge, there exists no citizen science-based water quality dataset easily accessible for public review and visualization.

Our public website display for WQMP data is searchable by location and parameter. Easy-to-understand definitions are provided for all water quality variables. Our efforts to (1) generate citizen science-based water quality data and (2) display it in an accessible way inform and empower our community to better understand and manage our local waterways.